

# PRINCIPLES AND DISCIPLINE

OF THE

United Brethren's Congregation,

AT

SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA,

*As adopted by the Congregation Council,*

MAY 17th, 1859.

*And approved by the Provincial Elders' Conference,*

MAY 20th, 1859.



SALEM, N. C.

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1859.

PRINCIPLES

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## PREFACE.

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The Constitution of the Moravian Congregation at Salem having been changed by the abrogation of the statute which permitted none but members of the church to hold property or carry on business in the town of Salem, it became necessary to undertake a revision of the then existing rules and regulations, in so far as they related to the outward and secular concerns of the congregation.

Such revision was duly made, and the Rules and Regulations following, having been discussed in successive meetings of the Congregation Council, were finally adopted by a vote of more than two-thirds of the members present. Consequently, according to established rules and precedents, they are of equal weight and obligation as though they had been embodied in the former rules and regulations; and hence also, the Congregation Council resolved that those brethren who had once signed the rules should not be required to do so again.

SALEM, JUNE 1, 1859.

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# PART I.

## PRINCIPLES OF FAITH AND PRACTICE.

1. The Church of the United Brethren, or Moravians, is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the Chief Corner Stone. (Eph. 2. 20.) As members of this church, we acknowledge the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to contain everything essential to salvation; and to be the only rule of our faith and practice.

We maintain the following points of doctrine as essential to salvation :

- a. The doctrine of the total depravity of human nature—that there is no health in us,—and that, since the fall, we have no power left to help ourselves.
- b. The doctrine of the love of God the Father, who “has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world,” and “who so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
- c. The doctrine of the real Godhead and real manhood of Jesus Christ ;—that God, the Creator of all things, was manifested in the flesh, and has reconciled the world unto himself,—that “he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”
- d. The doctrine of the atonement and satisfaction of Jesus Christ for us ;—that “he was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification ;” and that in his merits alone we find forgiveness of sins and peace with God.
- e. The doctrine of the Holy Ghost and his gracious operations ;—that it is he who works in us the knowledge of sin, faith in Jesus, and the witness that we are the children of God.
- f. The doctrine of the fruits of faith ;—that it must show itself as an active principle, by a willing obedience to God’s

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commandments, flowing from love and gratitude. (See Synodal Results, 1857, p. 7.)

2. The only object of our religious union is to constitute a church of Jesus Christ, in which the pure word of God is preached, the sacraments are duly administered, and christian discipline is maintained.
3. We recognize as a true member of Christ's body every one, who, through the Holy Ghost, has experienced the new birth. Hence we regard all children of God as our brethren in Christ, loving them sincerely and heartily, and disclaiming, as altogether opposed to the mind of Christ, all sectarian animosity arising from diversity of views on points of doctrine, discipline, or church government.
4. Esteeming it a great privilege to meet together for the worship of God and for mutual edification, we will be faithful in attending our meetings, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together." (Heb. 10. 25.)
5. We consider ourselves bound faithfully to provide a sufficient and suitable support for our ministers and their families; and we will also bear an equitable part in defraying all other expenses connected with the service of the congregation.
6. Being members of the Moravian Church, we consider ourselves in duty bound to take a share in meeting the common necessities of the province to which we belong, and of the Brethren's Unity at large,—especially the missions among the heathen.
7. As regards our children, we desire ever to recognize them as the property of our Lord Jesus Christ, purchased with his most precious blood; and to follow the divine precept, to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Eph. 6. 4.) Hence it is expected of all parents that they faithfully endeavor to guard their children against everything that might prove hurtful to their souls; that they, through grace, obtained by prayer and supplication, be priests of God, lifting up holy hands for themselves and their families; declaring to them the love of Jesus, and in no wise neglecting the regular observance of family devotion; that they set be-

fore them a consistent christian example ; that they cause their children punctually to attend school, religious instruction, and the meetings for worship ; that they be suitably employed at home ; and that, as they increase in years, they be accustomed to habits of order and decorum, and to a well regulated and moral conduct.

8. As true brotherly love is characteristic of the disciples of Jesus, we will hold it fast as the bond of perfection. We will endeavor in love to serve and aid one another ; to bear with and forgive one another, mutually to exercise meekness, humility, and becoming respect, and carefully avoid whatever might interrupt that love, such as backbiting, slandering, or other uncharitable practices. We desire to love one another as Christ hath loved us.
9. As we are called, through the grace of God, to be children of peace, we will follow after peace with all men, carefully endeavoring to obey the precepts of our Saviour, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them ;" and bearing in mind the important charge, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."
10. We recognize the duty of relieving the necessities of all such members, as may, through age, sickness, or other afflictions, have become destitute and unable to maintain themselves. We likewise assume the obligation of so providing for the education of destitute orphans in the congregation, that they may become useful members of society, and capable of procuring for themselves an honest livelihood.
11. In regard to dress, domestic arrangements, and the like, we will aim at frugality, propriety, and economy, removing far from us all extravagance, vanity, and abuse of worldly goods.
12. We consider ourselves in duty bound to provide things honest in the sight of all men, as well as in the sight of God ; consequently we will endeavor to be "not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord ;" and we will steadily discountenance the sin of habitual idleness.

13. We will not forget to hallow the Lord's day. We will make a faithful use of it as a day for devout meditation, and for building ourselves up in our most holy faith. The carrying on of worldly business or labor, other than works of charity or necessity; the frequenting of places of worldly resort, or anything which interferes with edification and attendance on Divine worship, is wholly inadmissible.
14. Regarding intemperance in the use of strong drink as a most pernicious and sinful practice, rendering men in an especial degree the servants of sin, we will endeavor to remove everything that can furnish occasion for this evil, from among us, and give timely admonition and warning to those who may be exposing themselves to temptation.
15. We will carefully beware of all books and publications which are opposed to the Bible or treat it irreverently, or of such as have an immoral tendency, or may in any way corrupt the mind, or turn it from the simplicity that is in Jesus. We disapprove of any participation in such amusements as have an injurious or even a questionable tendency with respect to Christian morals.
16. In case misunderstandings or differences arise among any of the members, they shall first, according to the commandment of Christ, endeavor to come to an amicable agreement and equitable settlement among themselves. Should they fail in so doing, the persons at variance shall select some other members of the congregation to act as mediators; and if the difficulty cannot thus be arranged to mutual satisfaction, the case shall be referred to the Board of Elders for brotherly investigation and decision. Should either of the parties even then refuse to be reconciled and pacified, such party can no longer be considered a member of the church. In case, however, the point of dispute should render a resort to the courts of justice indispensable, everything at variance with our character as brethren is to be avoided.
17. Should any one be overtaken in a fault, (Gal. 6. 1.) we will endeavor to restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; and when, on committing an error, we are reprov'd and ad-



monished, we will, by the grace of God, receive reproof thankfully, and strive to amend, considering all such admonitions as great benefits conferred upon us.

18. Inasmuch as it behooves every member of the church in all things to walk worthy of the gospel, so also shall those who give offence to others, and refuse correction, after repeated admonition and reproof, be excluded from church-fellowship, according to the rule: "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person."
19. If, therefore, any member in word or deed, act contrary to the rules and regulations of the church, and by his example tempt others to do the same; transgressing the laws of the country; overreaching his neighbor in trade; in any manner taking part in gambling and lotteries; or being guilty of lying, backbiting and calumny; giving himself up to drunkenness; neglecting to satisfy his creditors; committing the sins of cursing and swearing, fornication and adultery, or other manifest works of the flesh as enumerated Gal. 5. 19-21., such an one can not longer be considered a member of the church.

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## PART II.

### **PRINCIPLES AND RULES RELATING TO THE CONSTITUTION OR FORM OF GOVERNMENT OF THE CONGREGATION.**

#### 1. GENERAL SYNODS.

The government of the Brethren's Church, under the supreme guidance of the Great Head of his church, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, is exercised by General Synods. Such a Synod constitutes, whenever assembled, the body to which pertains the chief legislative power for all general affairs of the church.



## 2. UNITY'S ELDERS' CONFERENCE.

The oversight and direction of the Unity from one general Synod to another, in all matters pertaining to general Synods, is committed to a Board, chosen by the Synod, and called the Unity's Elders' Conference, or the Directing Board of the Protestant Church of the Brethren. All other Boards, as well as servants of the Unity, by whatsoever power appointed, are responsible to this Board, in all matters over which the General Synod has jurisdiction.

## 3. PROVINCIAL SYNODS.

The chief direction of all provincial concerns, and the power of legislating upon them, belongs immediately to Provincial Synods. These Synods are specially charged with the duty of examining thoroughly the spiritual as well as temporal condition of the congregations within the province.

## 4. PROVINCIAL ELDERS' CONFERENCE.

The chief board of administration in all provincial affairs is the Provincial Elders' Conference. This Board is responsible to the Provincial Synod; and is accountable to it for its administration.

## 5. BOARDS OF THE SALEM CONGREGATION.

1. BOARD OF ELDERS.—The Board of Elders shall be composed of the Pastor or Pastors of the Congregation, the Principal of the Salem Female Academy, and three other brethren, to be elected by the Congregation Council, from among the members of the Council. They shall be 30 years of age, and not less than five years members of the church.—After the first election, these three brethren, shall, at the first meeting of the Board, determine by lot whose term of office shall expire respectively, at the end of the first, second and third year, (in like manner as hereinafter provided for the Board of Trustees,) and after the first election one member shall be elected annually, to serve for three years. The election shall be on the first Tuesday in May of every year—the day fixed for the election of members of the Board of Trustees. The election of the Board of Elders shall be first in order.

At the meetings of the Board the pastor shall preside; and in case there is more than one pastor, the senior (i. e. the principal) one shall be president.

It shall be the duty of the Board of Elders :

- a. To watch over the spiritual and moral well-being of the Congregation as a whole.
- b. To regulate the various meetings for worship.
- c. To maintain the proper exercise of church discipline.
- d. To decide upon applications for church membership.
- e. To determine for what purposes the church edifice shall be used.
- f. To appoint the Organist, and the principal chapel servants, both male and female, and these shall appoint their assistants, with the concurrence of the Board.
- g. In general to carry out, in this Congregation, the principles and rules enacted by the proper authorities of the church of the United Brethren.

2. BOARD OF TRUSTEES.—The Board of Trustees shall be composed of the Warden of the Congregation, (so long as such an officer with his present functions, shall be retained in the Congregation,) and six brethren, to be elected by the Congregation Council, who must be 25 years of age and have been members of the Church three years.

After the first election the six brethren elected shall, at their first meeting divide themselves by lot into three classes; the time of service of the first class shall expire at the end of the first year; that of the second class at the end of the second year; and that of the third class at the end of the third year; so that one third, viz. two members must be chosen every year after the first, and their term of service shall then be three years. The election shall be held on the first Tuesday of May in every year.

Should the office of Warden become extinct, the six elected members shall constitute the Board.

At the first meeting after each annual election the Board shall organize by electing a President and Secretary.

It shall be the duty of the Board of Trustees :

- a.* To manage and direct all secular and financial affairs of the Congregation, and of the Salem Diacony and single Sisters' Diacony in particular.
  - b.* To determine the Salaries of the Minister, the Warden, and other officers and servants of the congregation.
  - c.* To fix upon the amount of church contributions to be annually paid by the members, and to adopt measures for the punctual payment of the same. They shall likewise have power to exonerate members on account of their inability to pay.
  - d.* To have the charge and superintendence of the graveyard and the appointment of persons to dig graves, and to keep the graveyard in proper order. No interment of any person, not a member of the church, shall take place therein without their consent having been obtained.
  - e.* To pay or cause to be paid the expenses necessarily incurred by the Board of Elders in the discharge of their legitimate sphere of duties.
3. SCHOOL BOARD.—The School Board shall be composed of the Pastor or Pastors of the Congregation, the Warden, and three other brethren to be elected biennially by the Congregation Council. It shall have the direction and management of the Congregation school for boys. One of the Pastors shall preside at its meetings, and be the Principal or Inspector of the School.

It shall be the duty of this Board :

- a.* To appoint the teacher or teachers, and fix their salaries.
- b.* To fix the price of tuition, and collect the same.
- c.* To provide for the expenses of the school.
- d.* To make and enforce rules and regulations for the government of the same.



All boys eight years of age and upwards, shall be admitted to this school, whose parents, or one of them, are members of this congregation, and who shall be willing to submit to the rules and regulations of the school. The sons of others, not members, may be admitted on such terms, and under such rules and regulations as the School Board may find expedient.

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The Board of Elders and the Board of Trustees have each their separate sphere of activity, and are not to interfere with one another in the performance of their particular duties; one having charge of the spiritual, and the other of the temporal concerns of the Congregation; yet it is desirable that they should be on terms of friendly intercourse, and even confer together in such cases as may arise where each Board is interested, or where such mutual conference may result for the manifest good of the Congregation. In cases of disagreement between these two Boards, a joint meeting of both may be had and the subject disposed of by a majority of votes.

No one shall hold a seat in the Board of Elders and in the Board of Trustees at the same time.

In case of absence of the presiding officer in any of the three boards, the members thereof shall appoint a President pro.tem.

Any vacancies occurring among the elective members of any of these three boards, may be filled by the remainder of the Board until the next time for a regular election.

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### CONGREGATION COUNCIL.

The Congregation Council shall be composed of all brethren, communicant members of the Congregation, who shall have attained to the age of 21 years, and who shall have subscribed to the rules and regulations of this congregation. The act of subscribing to the rules can take place only in the presence of the minister or Board of Elders, who shall add the date of the signature.

The pastor, or in case there be two, the senior pastor, shall preside in all meetings of the Council. In case of his absence



the Congregation Council shall elect a chairman pro. tem.— All meetings of the Congregation Council shall be announced on two occasions of public worship. It shall be the duty of the Congregation Council to elect the Delegates to the Provincial Synods; the elective members of the Board of Elders, Board of Trustees, and School Board, and all other officers and boards of the Congregation not herein otherwise provided for.

The Board of Elders shall have authority at any time to convene the Congregation Council; and upon application of the Board of Trustees, or ten members of the Council, they shall call a meeting.

All standing officers elected by the Congregation Council shall continue in office until their successors are elected. All elections shall be by ballot, and a majority of the votes cast shall be necessary to a choice.

Whenever it shall be deemed expedient by the Board of Elders, or Board of Trustees, Congregational matters may be by them submitted to the Congregation Council. All matters which relate to the temporal or spiritual welfare of the Congregation may be discussed in the Congregation Council.

The annual accounts of the Diacony shall be submitted to the Council.

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Appointments to office in the Congregation shall in every instance take place agreeably to the rules laid down by the Synods of our church. The exclusive right of appointment is vested in the Provincial Elders' Conference. In case of vacancy by death or otherwise, in the Pastorate or office of Warden, when a brother is appointed by the Provincial Elders' Conference, the name of the brother so appointed shall be by the Provincial Elders' Conference laid before the Board of Elders, and then before the Board of Trustees, and these Boards shall decide whether the person whose name is laid before them shall be accepted or not; and they may in behalf of the congregation, propose the name of another person.

See Digest of Prov. Synod, 1856, p. 35, § 52.

On the other hand, if cases should occur where ministering brethren have lost the confidence of the congregation, or dissatisfaction exist respecting them, in office, the Congregation may through these Boards express their opinions and wishes to the Provincial Elders Conference.

Digest, 1856, p. 35, § 52.

All resolutions of the Board of Elders, Board of Trustees and Congregation Council not referring merely to their current business, but containing permanent regulations, shall be submitted for approbation to the Provincial Elder's Conference who shall, however, be at liberty to withhold their sanction only in case such resolutions, in the opinion of said conference, are at variance with the principles and constitution of the church.

Persons desiring to be received as members, must apply to the minister, who shall, as soon as may be, submit the application to the Board of Elders, who shall have full power to grant or refuse the application, at once, or to fix upon a term of probation. Candidates for the Holy Communion, under ordinary circumstances, must first attend a preparatory course of catechetical instruction, and then obtain admission to the Lord's table, if unbaptized, through baptism; or if already baptized, through confirmation.

Persons who have previously been full members of another Christian denomination are received by extending to them the right hand of Christian fellowship in a meeting of the Congregation, on which occasion a charge may be addressed to them, and a prayer be offered up in their behalf. Such persons are required, if possible, to produce certificates of their baptism and admission to the Lord's table.

Whenever persons having children are admitted to church membership, such only of their children as are under fourteen years of age shall be considered as admitted along with the parents.

Members of other Moravian Congregations, removing into our midst and desiring to be admitted to church privileges, shall

call upon the minister and give satisfactory evidence of their membership, whereupon they shall be considered members of this congregation. The names of persons so admitted shall be communicated in a meeting of the congregation.

Members are expected to bring their infant children to be baptized as soon as convenient, and if circumstances permit, in the church. Such baptized children, by the sacrament of Baptism, have become incorporated into the visible church of Christ, and are to be regarded as members of the Congregation,—unless by their misconduct in riper years, they have forfeited their privileges.

Whenever members of the church desire to enter into the state of matrimony, they are to give notice of their intention to the minister of the congregation; whom as a general rule, they will request to perform the ceremony of their marriage.

Whenever it becomes necessary to decide upon the question whether a member of the Congregation shall any longer be regarded as such (according to Part I, § 18 and 19 of these rules) the case shall be taken into consideration by the Board of Elders, and everything shall be done that the case may be determined fairly and according to the truth, the member in question being in every case entitled to a hearing before the Board.

Members who have been excluded shall be duly notified thereof by the minister, and shall in all cases have the right of appeal to the Provincial Elders' Conference.

Whenever any member shall have, for the space of twelve months, absented himself from the Lord's supper, or from the meetings of the Congregation, or shall have refused to contribute any sum towards the discharge of the regular dues of membership, without, in either case, assigning a sufficient reason, such member shall be considered as having withdrawn from the membership of the church.

In order that the Congregation may be placed in a proper relation to such as have been excluded, or have withdrawn from



church fellowship, all cases of exclusion or withdrawal shall be mentioned to the congregation in an appropriate way, at a suitable meeting.

Whenever the interests of the Congregation, at any future time, shall render it expedient to alter or amend, or add to, any of these present rules and regulations, such alterations, amendments, or additions, if adopted by a majority of two-thirds of all the votes cast in the Congregation Council, shall be of equal weight and obligation as though they had been literally embodied in these present rules and regulations; provided the vote on such alterations or amendments is not taken in the same meeting in which they were introduced, but at some subsequent meeting of the Congregation Council expressly convened for that purpose; and, provided further, that all such proposed alterations and amendments have obtained the sanction of the Provincial Elders' Conference.



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